

Pantex Plant

Possible Worker Exposures

Workers were exposed to low-level radiation from nuclear weapons components and industrial x-ray equipment, as well as solvents and other hazardous chemicals formerly used to make weapon explosives. Some weapon components on the site contain beryllium. Past and present waste practices permitted by state law, including burying construction and demolition debris like asbestos in unlined landfills, can create threats to worker health.

Important Contact Information

U.S. Department of Energy Workers' Compensation Helpline (toll-free): **877-447-9756**

U.S. Department of Energy Benefits Website: <http://www.eh.doe.gov/benefits>

Site Background

The Department of Energy's Pantex Plant began in 1942 as an Army Ordnance Corps facility for loading conventional ammunition shells and bombs. Nuclear operations began in 1950.

Workers at the site assemble nuclear weapons; disassemble weapons being retired from the nuclear stockpile; evaluate, repair and retrofit weapons; demilitarize and sanitize components from dismantled weapons; and develop, fabricate and test chemical explosives and explosive components for nuclear weapons. The site provides storage for plutonium pits from dismantled nuclear weapons. Up to 2,000 weapons are scheduled to be dismantled each year.

The Pantex Plant is in Carson County, Texas, approximately 17 miles northeast of Amarillo. The plant itself covers 9,100 acres. In addition, there is a buffer zone consisting of a 1,077-acre portion of Pantex Lake owned by the Department of Energy and 3,170 acres of land the department leases from Texas Technological University.

Management and Integrating Contractor:	Mason & Hangar Corporation
Number of current contractor employees	2,800 (estimated)
Historical number of contractor employees	9,500 (estimated)